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(18-21 June 2013)*

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Contents

		Page
I.	Organization of the session	3
	A. Opening statements by the President and Executive Director	3
	B. Adoption of the agenda	3
II.	Deliberations of the Executive Board	4
	A. Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan	4
	B. UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017	6
	C. Harnessing knowledge to achieve results for children	9
	D. Report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF	10
	E. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation	11
	F. Annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations, and revised evaluation policy of UNICEF	14
	G. Thematic synthesis report on evaluation of humanitarian action	16
	H. Report of the Ethics Office	17
	I. Office of Internal Audit and Investigations: 2012 annual report to the Executive Board	17
	J. Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association	19
	K. Reports of Executive Board field visits	19
	L. Other matters	20
	M. Adoption of draft decisions	20
	N. Closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board	20
Annex		
	Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session of 2013	22

I. Organization of the session

A. Opening statements by the President and the Executive Director

1. The President drew attention to the connection between disability and poverty. As shown in the 2013 report on children with disabilities, *The State of the World's Children*, children with disabilities, particularly girls, are more likely to face poverty and lack of access to education and health services. The ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities would create a good basis to continue efforts against discrimination and towards a world where children have the opportunity to participate, learn and develop to their full potential.

2. In regard to the agenda for the session, he said the draft UNICEF strategic plan for 2014-2017 was an important tool, and he encouraged members of the Executive Board to focus on providing concrete guidance to UNICEF.

3. The Executive Director said UNICEF was creating a "new normal". Its mission to realize the rights of children everywhere would never change, but how it carried out that mission would continue to evolve. Today's "normal" included the refocus on equity, innovation and greater transparency. He cited some of the achievements of UNICEF and its partners in 2012 in the areas of immunization, education, access to water and reduction of disparity.

4. The draft strategic plan would reflect the discussions on the post-2015 agenda. Drafting the plan had required choosing a limited number of priorities and distinguishing between areas that are stand-alone and those that should be incorporated across all outcomes. Other challenges were to integrate the outcomes and priorities and to build networks between various silos, both programmatically and with other organizations and United Nations agencies.

5. The Syrian conflict was fast becoming a regional crisis. The hardworking staff and resources of UNICEF were stretched to their limits. He would welcome members' ideas on how to mobilize the needed resources and continue responding effectively to the needs of all children in crises.

6. The Fund would continue reassessing internal business practices. Over the last two years, the organization had saved $13.7 million, and a recent assessment by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network found significant improvements in the management effectiveness of UNICEF.

B. Adoption of the agenda

7. The Executive Board adopted the provisional agenda, timetable and organization of work for the session (E/ICEF/2013/10).

8. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 30 observer delegations, including one intergovernmental organization, two international organizations, nine National Committees for UNICEF and three non-governmental organizations.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan

9. The Executive Director remarked on the progress made and results achieved by UNICEF in its five focus areas, cross-cutting work, and operational effectiveness and efficiency. The report (E/ICEF/2013/11) and its data companion were then introduced by the Director for Policy and Strategy.

10. Many delegations congratulated UNICEF and its partners for the results achieved. Several welcomed the urgency UNICEF had brought to the issue of stunting. They also welcomed the emphasis placed on children from disadvantaged and marginalized backgrounds and on those who are disabled.

11. Speakers expressed appreciation for the significant contribution of UNICEF to increasing the focus on equity, especially as overall progress often concealed widening disparities. The Monitoring Results for Equity System was an essential tool to address those disparities and UNICEF should continue to promulgate its use across the United Nations system.

12. Delegations highlighted the contribution of UNICEF to the collection, analysis and dissemination of disaggregated data, which had led to strengthened national capacities to monitor the situation of children. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys completed in 2012 provided a wealth of information on indicators used by the United Nations system as a whole.

13. A speaker welcomed the new scope given to the upstream work within country programmes to build stronger national health, education and protection systems through enhanced partnerships such as the GAVI Alliance, the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement and the Global Education Initiative.

14. Speaking for the Group of African States, a delegation recognized the efforts of UNICEF to strengthen social welfare, social protection, justice, education and health services. UNICEF should review systemic challenges with regard to demonstrating results at the impact level, which would help in the implementation of further interventions and the sharing of lessons learned.

15. The focus on equity was noted in the successful initiatives offering alternatives to education for out-of-school children and youth and in the search for innovative learning options to increase access to education for hard-to-reach and excluded children.

16. As efforts to prevent HIV infections and harmful behaviours among adolescents had not been as successful as efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, speakers urged UNICEF to develop appropriate programming strategies for adolescents. One speaker said that her Government had focused on education, since young people who failed to complete basic education were twice as likely to become infected with HIV.

17. Some delegations said the report could better reflect the importance of gender mainstreaming in UNICEF programming. Future reports should reflect commitments to address gender equality, including by providing figures on gender-related resource allocation and expenditures. The new strategic priority action plan for

gender equality should ensure that future reports state what has been achieved for boys and girls on the ground as a result of the Fund's work.

18. Speakers welcomed the achievements of UNICEF in the area of child protection. One delegation expressed support for creating systems that could provide children with full protection. Another said that the recent meta-analysis of UNICEF child protection programmes was a step in the right direction in demonstrating progress towards results at all levels. Speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, a delegation said UNICEF played a central role in the United Nations system in combating violence against children. Another delegation noted that UNICEF, as a member of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, should continue to support implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

19. It was noted that the protection mandate of UNICEF applied not only to development activities but also to its work in the humanitarian field. Referring to the first global evaluation of child protection in emergencies, a delegation said it would welcome information on plans to measure performance in humanitarian situations.

20. Delegations expressed support for UNICEF efforts to strengthen the linkage between humanitarian and development assistance and building resilience. Speakers supported the strong commitment of UNICEF to the transformative agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, emphasizing that this must be translated into concrete action across all humanitarian operations. In addition, greater efforts must be made to communicate the intent of the transformative agenda to national Governments. Another speaker said it was time to implement the tools and mechanisms developed by the Committee and member agencies.

21. A number of delegations said that the reporting on results could be improved. Clearer reporting on the existing strategic plan and the indicators in the development results framework was needed to better assess the organization's performance. The results analysis under each focus area could benefit from an analysis of the progress and challenges in relation to the respective situations for girls and boys.

22. The report should allow readers to follow developing trends within a cycle of the strategic plan and make comparisons between various cycles and between regions. There should be more information on how the reported achievements contributed to higher-level outcomes, and additional references to risk assessment and mitigation.

23. Speakers welcomed the efforts of UNICEF in strengthening results-based management, in promoting innovation and in increasing efficiency gains and cost-savings, for example through the virtual integrated system of information (VISION), which had enabled standardized results-based planning and reporting, thereby helping to improve transparency and accountability.

24. One speaker welcomed the emphasis on strong enterprise risk management and the work of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations as well as the evaluation function. A delegation said that the quality of evaluations needed to improve. Moreover, the number of evaluations submitted had decreased significantly in recent years despite the requirements of the 2008 evaluation policy. Another delegation encouraged UNICEF to include more information on how evidence generated by evaluations had been used to inform programming policy and advocacy.

25. Other speakers commended UNICEF for its continued commitment to innovation and future-oriented policies, particularly the important step of joining the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

26. Speakers welcomed the growth in regular resources and encouraged all countries to increase support for core and thematic funds and reduce the trend of earmarking funds. One delegation welcomed the UNICEF policy of working with Governments, especially those of middle-income countries, to make more effective use of domestic resources to benefit children.

27. Delegations said that the savings from inter-agency activities and coherence in working with other agencies must be reinvested in programmes and other management initiatives. UNICEF should support the formulation of standard operating procedures for the "Delivering as one" initiative.

28. Delegations expressed appreciation for the dedication of UNICEF staff around the world, particularly in humanitarian crises. Speakers urged UNICEF to continue to support the many thousands of people, particularly children, affected by the Syrian crisis.

29. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/7 (see annex).

B. UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017

30. The President, also speaking on behalf of the Executive Director, and several delegations condemned the attacks that had taken place that day at the United Nations compound in Mogadishu, killing several United Nations staff members. He also paid tribute to the many UNICEF staff members who worked in dangerous situations around the world.

31. The Deputy Executive Director for Programmes made a statement before the report (E/ICEF/2013/16 and E/ICEF/2013/16/Add.1) was introduced by the Director for Policy and Strategy.

32. Delegations commended UNICEF for the inclusive, participatory and transparent process conducted over the past few months in developing the draft strategic plan.

33. Many delegations said they agreed with the overall focus on the most disadvantaged, excluded and vulnerable children. They also agreed with the objectives of advancing UNICEF partnerships, strengthening national capacities and fostering regional cooperation so that Member States could be self-reliant in advancing the rights of children.

34. Speakers said that the plan was important for the work of UNICEF in implementing the post-2015 agenda. It should be flexible enough so that country programmes would be linked to national development needs and priorities and respect the principle of national ownership. Speakers stressed the importance of capacity-building in the legislative and policy infrastructure. Also emphasized was the need for buy-in from stakeholders at the community level.

35. Almost all speakers stressed the importance of the link to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. UNICEF was urged to work with other United Nations agencies to

create common indicators and a coherent harmonized language to measure progress in implementing the mandates of the review. The simultaneous preparation of the new strategic plans for the funds and programmes had provided an opportunity to clearly establish complementarities and synergies, such as that between UNICEF and UNFPA on such issues as early marriage and early pregnancy, female genital mutilation/cutting and violence against adolescents.

36. UNICEF was asked to actively engage in the delivering as one approach and to empower resident coordinators as representatives of the entire United Nations system at the country level. The projected UNICEF contribution of $40 million to the resident coordinator system was a good step in support of the principles of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. UNICEF should also be a champion of harmonization of business practices and the removal of bottlenecks. Steps were needed to address fragmentation in procurement.

37. One delegation suggested exercising caution about the use of terminology that had not been agreed at the intergovernmental level, for example "fragile State", and said it was important to clarify the different types and mandates of reference documents cited in the draft strategic plan.

38. A group of delegations said the plan must make a clear distinction between the two important tasks vested in UNICEF: its global role in advocacy, research and monitoring of the situation of children and its role as development and humanitarian actor at the country level. Another group said it was important to consider the centrality of the eradication of poverty as the overarching priority for the international community and the United Nations development system.

39. Strong support was expressed for the equity approach as a means to reach vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded children, but some speakers said it should not undermine the principle of non-discrimination. One group of delegations recommended that UNICEF explicitly define how the equity approach supported the human-rights based approach to programming, which should be more closely integrated into the work of UNICEF. It was noted that the plan should explain how countries would be supported in implementing the recommendations of the treaty bodies.

40. Speakers said that inequity was present in a broad range of countries and regions, and that innovation and partnerships could promote significant development efforts to support children, particularly in middle-income countries.

41. A number of delegations emphasized the importance of South-South cooperation, with some noting that it needed more "muscle" from the United Nations system.

42. Delegations commented on the balance among the various programmatic outcomes. For water, sanitation and hygiene, it was suggested that approaches take into account the challenges regarding sustainable water resources, waste water management and water quality. In regard to health, several speakers encouraged UNICEF to pay more attention to health systems and infrastructures in the context of the global campaign to ensure universal health coverage. Various speakers expressed appreciation for the focus on malaria and HIV/AIDS. They emphasized the importance of child protection and education for the rights of the child and said that resources for the key stand-alone goals of health and education should not be

diluted. UNICEF was also encouraged to sharpen its focus on education in the post-conflict humanitarian context.

43. Many delegations expressed support for the comprehensive incorporation of humanitarian efforts into the plan and the emphasis on resilience-building. UNICEF was asked to elaborate on how it intended to strengthen the link between humanitarian action and development, and to include an analysis of its role and value added as a humanitarian actor. There should be more and better evaluations of humanitarian work, with a clear focus on results for children and women and clear indicators for monitoring the implementation of the transformative agenda. Clarification was needed in regard to the role of UNICEF in implementation of the agenda and the resources required. The strategic plan should provide more information on the approach of UNICEF to risk and the risk management strategy, including cooperation with other United Nations agencies.

44. Several speakers stressed the importance of child protection as a core issue for UNICEF, requiring substantial resources. They said there were significant opportunities for UNICEF to be the lead agency in supporting multisectoral approaches to building child protection systems. Children with disabilities needed special attention.

45. In respect of the issue of gender equality, many delegations said gender equality needed to be more explicit in the strategic plan as well as in programme documents and the reporting of results. UNICEF efforts in gender mainstreaming and its active participation in piloting the United Nations system-wide action plan were welcome, but gender must be addressed more systematically and coherently in the strategic plan, which should include clear guidance on mainstreaming the empowerment of girls and women. The new gender action plan developed by UNICEF should be adequately funded and form an integral part of the new strategic plan rather than stand alone as a separate document.

46. The linkage of gender equality to other policy priorities such as health, education and nutrition needed to be explicit. UNICEF needed to focus not only on women, mothers and girls but also on the attitudes and engagement of boys, men and fathers, and on some of the challenges faced by boys.

47. Several speakers addressed the issue of adolescence, saying investments in early childhood survival should go hand-in-hand with the safe, healthy and emancipated development of adolescent boys and girls. The new plan provided an opportunity to ensure that their specific needs and challenges were better taken into account.

48. One delegation commended UNICEF for leveraging a growing diversity of partnerships with civil society groups, the private sector and international financial institutions. Another urged UNICEF to articulate more clearly the plans it had developed with partners relating to the initiatives, "Committing to child survival: a promise renewed" and "A world fit for children" and the integrated global action plan for the prevention and control of pneumonia and diarrhoea. UNICEF was requested to share its expertise in the area of partnerships with other United Nations agencies, particularly in the context of the resident coordinator system. A speaker welcomed the specific reference in the draft strategic plan to the supportive role of the National Committees for UNICEF. It was also suggested that UNICEF include faith-based organizations in the sections on partnership.

49. Many delegations commented on the proposed results framework, saying that it should be strong and provide clear goals at output, outcome and impact levels. It should also have well-defined indicators, including qualitative indicators with baseline data and targets, so that UNICEF could clearly identify its contribution to the results. There was still room for improving the logic among the different levels of the results chains and for simplifying and improving goal formulations and indicators.

50. The plan lacked clear, specific, quantifiable output indicators that were clearly attributable to UNICEF and could be aggregated from country level to global level. Also needed were clear indicators of country programme performance against expected results, with defined baselines and targets. UNICEF was requested to provide indicators ensuring the availability of data disaggregated by gender and disability, where appropriate and possible.

51. It was crucial that the strategy and results framework should be easily understood by a broad audience, ranging from stakeholders at the field level to policymakers. There should be clearer indications on inter-agency cooperation in such areas as health and disaster risk response.

52. In the integrated budget for 2014-2017, UNICEF was encouraged by one delegation to split the budget line under the cluster "Independent corporate oversight and assurance" into two budget lines, one for the Evaluation Office and one for internal audit and investigations.

53. In preparing a final draft of the plan, UNICEF should show clear theories of change to demonstrate how outputs were directly attributable to UNICEF, how outputs and outcomes were linked and how risks were assessed and managed.

54. The Deputy Executive Director for Programmes discussed some of the initiatives UNICEF was taking to strengthen its work in gender equality, including measurement and reporting on progress. The Director for Policy and Practice elaborated on the simplification and improvement of reporting on outputs, outcomes and results, including through streamlining the indicators.

55. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/8 (see annex).

C. Harnessing knowledge to achieve results for children

56. Following preliminary remarks by the Deputy Executive Director for Programmes, the Director of the Office of Research presented a report (E/ICEF/2013/CRP.14).

57. The Deputy Executive Director said that since 2012, UNICEF had focused attention on a new foundation for research and had taken steps in repositioning knowledge management, but much more needed to be done, especially to respond to the large demand from the field. The efforts described in the report were a collaborative effort between the Office of Research, the Division of Policy and Strategy, the Programme Division, the information technology team, the emergency and humanitarian team, and other divisions and offices.

58. The Director of the Office of Research described the progress made in building an evidence base, filling knowledge gaps and using data and research in advocacy for children. UNICEF needed to increase its capacity to use research data, improve quality assurance of research and continue to work on the ethics of research on

children. Looking ahead, he said UNICEF wanted to accelerate that trajectory and develop a research agenda for children that could be a catalyst for bringing together and prioritizing the major issues concerning children.

59. One delegation welcomed the proposal for extended research on violence against children, and encouraged UNICEF to include research on psychosocial matters. The initiative for research on school-based interventions could strengthen the cross-sectoral approach of the UNICEF strategic plan for 2014-2017. The delegation stressed the relevance of the Fund's work to developing improved methods to collect data and statistics on children living with disabilities, and was pleased to see that the report highlighted the role of the National Committees in advocacy on children's rights. The delegation asked how cross-sectoral issues and implementation strategies in the new strategic plan, such as research and evidence generation, would be financed and how the ideas for future directions had been translated into a workplan and budget.

60. The Director thanked delegations for supporting the research efforts of UNICEF, particularly for the proposed areas of research, which had begun to map the gaps in those areas. He noted that much of the funding would come through the various results areas of the strategic plan, which would provide the framework for the workplan and budget.

D. Report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF

61. The report (E/ICEF/2013/12) was introduced by the Deputy Executive Director for Programmes and the Principal Adviser for Gender and Rights.

62. A group of 16 delegations welcomed the frankness of the analysis in the report, and said it clearly identified a number of challenges. There had been significant improvements in the collection and availability of sex-disaggregated data, although the annual report of the Executive Director and the draft UNICEF strategic plan for 2014-2017 insufficiently addressed gender equality.

63. The two UNICEF mechanisms for knowledge management on gender issues at the global level, a self-assessment survey of gender mainstreaming in UNICEF and a "community of practice" on gender, had been less effective than anticipated owing to lack of participation. The delegations asked what was being done to create a regular forum for exchange, learning and strategy planning regarding UNICEF gender priorities and programming, and if other, more practical mechanisms were being considered.

64. The delegations made four recommendations to improve the progress of UNICEF gender equality. (a) strengthen the draft strategic plan by including gender-sensitive performance information; (b) develop a strong and well-articulated strategic priority action plan, clearly linked to the draft strategic plan, costed and with adequate funds allocated for gender equality; (c) make performance information in the strategic priority action plan consistent with the gender-sensitive results and sex-disaggregated indicators to be reflected in the draft strategic plan; and (d) clarify the linkage between gender equality and the equity approach.

65. Another delegation suggested that UNICEF summarize lessons learned to improve the design of the indicators by better reflecting the situation on the ground.

In formulating the new strategic priority action plan, UNICEF should take into account countries' different situations and needs.

66. Another group of delegations noted that the inadequate capacities and resource allocations mentioned in the report needed to be addressed. Gender should be an institutional priority, and UNICEF needed a systemic strategy to support the sharing of good practices and gender-equitable programming. Organization-wide guidance, tools, processes and monitoring mechanisms must be better managed.

67. Delegations noted that targets for country gender reviews had been met, even in regions where they had previously lagged behind, but called for more results across countries and sectors. UNICEF would have to work towards closing the gaps in technical capacity at the country and regional levels. The focal point system should be strengthened and responsive strategies employed.

68. It was suggested that UNICEF continue to play an active role in inter-agency processes and initiatives to promote gender equality. Better screening procedures for engaging partners were needed to improve capacity and relevant expertise on gender issues. Subsequent reporting should include a clear definition and articulation of gender issues, equality and empowerment and mechanisms to help to determine whether programmes were effectively implementing gender strategies and achieving gender-equitable results.

69. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/9 (see annex).

E. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

1. Draft country programme and common country programme documents

70. The President announced that the Executive Board would have before it seven draft country programme documents and two draft common country programme documents, as well as the UNICEF results and resources frameworks for each draft common country programme documents. He also indicated that a document containing reasons for extensions of ongoing country programmes was presented to the Executive Board.

71. In accordance with its decision 2008/17, the Executive Board was informed of the reasons for deferment to the second regular session of 2013 of the presentation of the draft country programme documents of Mexico and Namibia, and of the draft subregional area programme document for the Gulf Area (E/ICEF/2013/CRP.11). The presentation of the draft country programme document for Kenya was deferred to the first regular session of 2014.

72. The Director of the Programme Division introduced the proposed country programmes and the extensions of ongoing country programmes presented for approval, noting that they demonstrated strategic engagement and commitment to narrowing the gaps to achieve outcomes for children, building a more equitable society and improving availability and access to basic social services for the most vulnerable children and families.

73. In accordance with decision 2013/4, the Board reviewed and approved, on an exceptional basis, the country programme document for Egypt (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.3) and the common country programme document for Rwanda (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-WFP/DCCP/2013/RWA/1 and Add.3).

74. The representative of Egypt said that the Girls' Education Initiative, the country's polio-free status and the national campaigns to eradicate female genital mutilation were examples of its solid cooperation with UNICEF. She stressed the importance of broadening the range of partnerships by mobilizing religious leaders, civil society, the media and the business sector, and by mainstreaming gender in all programme components.

75. The representative of Rwanda said all the programmes carried out through the delivering as one initiative had been tailored to the needs of the Rwandan people and were in line with national priorities. She acknowledged the support of UNICEF for vital programmes targeting children's well-being from early childhood through adolescence, in the areas of health and nutrition, education, protection and HIV prevention.

76. Delegations commended the leadership and ownership demonstrated by the Government of Rwanda in supporting the programme process, noting that the results framework was reasonably good, and that some indicators at the outcome level had been identified, although some gender equality aspects and the link between child protection and gender-based violence could be further clarified. They recommended that the country team review the recommendations from the country-led 2010 evaluation on gender equality.

77. Another delegation said that the UNICEF office in Rwanda, which coordinated with the Government and development partners, should continue to strengthen its collaboration with partners, particularly in education and water and sanitation. UNICEF should also strengthen its cooperation with non-governmental organizations to help build their capacities, they said.

West and Central Africa

78. The country programme documents for Benin, Congo, Niger, Nigeria and Togo (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.4, E/ICEF/2013/P/L.5, E/ICEF/2013/P/L.6, E/ICEF/2013/P/L.7 and E/ICEF/2013/P/L.8, respectively) were presented by the Acting Regional Director.

79. The representative of Niger said the country programme reflected national priorities. Despite a high fertility rate, progress had been made thanks to the Government's political will and international cooperation. He asked how UNICEF was working with partners to help countries improve the situation of young girls. The Acting Regional Director said that UNICEF worked with interested donors on the issue and consulted with the Government to determine the best model for the transition from primary to secondary school and for systematically delaying the age of marriage and the first pregnancy.

80. The representative of Nigeria said that UNICEF remained an important partner in the country's people-centred development. The country programme document, aligned with national development initiatives, showed that, while considerable progress had been made in certain aspects of development, challenges remained in infant and child mortality, the transmission of wild polio virus and the considerable burden of HIV infection.

81. The representative of Benin said that the new country programme document, which drew on lessons learned from previous programmes and was aligned with the country's growth and poverty reduction strategy, highlighted the social and

economic challenges facing the country, including significant inequities in nutrition and access to health care, education and social and welfare protection.

82. The representative of Togo said that UNICEF had contributed significantly to national development programmes for health, basic education and social protection. Thanks to support from partners like UNICEF, the Government had been able to allocate more funds to women's and children's health.

83. The representative of the Congo said that the Government had made significant progress in increasing access to basic social services. The new country programme document would enable the country to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals by protecting the rights of children, particularly the most vulnerable.

84. Some delegations noted that the draft country programme document for the Congo presented two proposals for improving education, and it was necessary to increase the number of educational institutions and teachers, building on efforts promoting a child-friendly environment.

Americas and the Caribbean

85. The Regional Director introduced the country programme document for Cuba (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.2).

86. The representative of Cuba said the country programme document was the result of a broad national participatory process, involving ministries, institutions and centres of learning. Cuba had achieved a number of Millennium Development Goals and was working on measures to improve the quality and sustainability of the achievements.

South Asia

87. The Regional Director introduced the draft common country programme document for Bhutan (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF/DCCP/2013/BTN/1 and Add.3).

88. The representative of Bhutan said that the delivering as one approach had increased the impact of the United Nations system in the country's development process. Bhutan's eleventh five-year plan, for 2014-2018, focused on self-reliance and inclusive "green" socioeconomic development, in an effort to tackle the multiple challenges of poverty, vulnerability to national disasters and climate change, urbanization, gender equality and youth employment. UNICEF had reflected those challenges and priorities in its outputs within the common country programme.

89. One delegation welcomed the fact that the common country programme document reflected the comparative strengths of the United Nations funds and programmes, with UNICEF directly supporting three of the four outcomes of the delivering as one programme, focusing on education, maternal and child health care, and the advancement of rights and protection of women and children. UNICEF engagement in improving the living conditions of the many children living in monastic institutions merited strong support, they said, commending UNICEF support for gender equality and promotion of the participation of women and youth in decision-making processes.

2. Extension of ongoing country programmes

90. Speaking on behalf of the Regional Directors for the Middle East and North Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa, the Director for Programmes informed the Executive Board of the six-month extension of the country programme of Kenya and of the one-year extension of the country programmes of Angola and the area programme for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine.

91. The representative of Kenya said the extension would allow the programme to align with the country's budgeting cycle, which commences in June.

92. The representative of Angola noted the progress made in protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse.

93. The representative of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations expressed appreciation for the important assistance provided to Palestinian children and women by UNICEF in the areas of education, health care, maternal care, nutrition and psychosocial programmes. He noted that the extension of the area programme was crucial for the next year.

94. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic noted that the development of the new area programme would be postponed in her country in the light of the instability.

95. The representative of Israel expressed the objection of her Government to some of the terminology used by the secretariat in the introduction of the item.

96. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2013/10, 2013/11 and 2013/12 (see annex), and deferred consideration of the decision on extensions of ongoing country programmes to the second regular session of 2013.

F. Annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations, and revised evaluation policy of UNICEF

97. The reports (E/ICEF/2013/13 and E/ICEF/2013/14) were introduced by the Director of the Evaluation Office.

98. A group of delegations said that the annual report was an excellent example of analytic evidence-based and forward-looking reporting that provided the Executive Board with a clear overview of the work of UNICEF, including useful observations on strength and weaknesses. The group welcomed the frank and self-critical analysis on issues, such as coverage, quality, demand and topical distribution of evaluations, including the particular challenges regarding evaluation in humanitarian contexts.

99. A second group said that the annual report indicated a healthy shift in how evaluation was used as a strategic tool to support organization-wide learning for improved performance and results. To further strengthen the evaluation function, the group encouraged UNICEF to take further steps to sharpen evaluation tools and strategic usage of evaluation results.

100. Delegations asked what specific measures would be taken to address two of that report's main observations: the declining number of evaluations and the declining proportion of impact and summative evaluations.

101. Speakers suggested that the policy address how UNICEF would ensure both the adequate quantity and quality of evaluations and that it propose more evaluations of major humanitarian programmes. In implementing the policy, UNICEF should pay special attention to evaluation quality assurance, with a specific focus on policy improvement. With respect to the use of evaluations, the revised policy rightly emphasized the importance of follow-up actions and provided guidance on utilization, dissemination and disclosure.

102. Speakers welcomed the fact that the key mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review had been taken into account in the revised policy through the emphasis on the importance of United Nations system-wide evaluations, capacity-building for joint evaluations and the United Nations Evaluation Group's norms and standards for evaluation. Delegations welcomed the participation of UNICEF in such inter-agency mechanisms for evaluation, and encouraged further efforts in that regard. Referring to the mention of weaknesses in inter-agency evaluation leadership and governance arrangements across the United Nations, delegations said they would welcome discussions on joint evaluations by the Executive Board as a concrete step forward.

103. Delegations welcomed the focus on evaluation planning and the move towards greater independence for the evaluation function. The policy clearly stated its link to the UNICEF mandate and mission on child rights, but the explicit link between the evaluation policy and the strategic plan could be elaborated further. Speakers expressed support for the proposal to prepare a global evaluation plan linked to the new strategic plan. Some said the policy document could be more explicit in emphasizing the importance of planning for evaluation as something that should be done concurrently with planning in general. Overall evaluation planning could be strengthened.

104. A group of delegations highlighted the importance of paying attention to equity and gender equality and strengthening the capacities of the organization's evaluation partners.

105. Delegations said that adequate resources must be allocated to the evaluation function and supported the commitment to allocate a minimum of 1 per cent of programme expenses for evaluations. The resources for the evaluation function must be reflected transparently and independently of other functions in the integrated budget, with a separate budget line to ensure predictable and untied funding. It was equally important that evaluation expenses could be tracked by enterprise management systems. Regarding the funding of decentralized evaluations, UNICEF should consider including evaluation expenses in programme budgets during the planning stage. UNICEF should direct scarce evaluation resources where they were most needed for programme learning and decision-making.

106. In terms of guiding principles, delegations encouraged UNICEF to make clear that it followed the human rights-based approach to development and include an explicit reference to the United Nations Evaluation Group's guidelines on the integration of human rights and gender equality in evaluation. A speaker said that evaluations should be conducted in full accordance with the UNICEF mandate, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of national accountability for development. Another said that the leading principle in conducting evaluations should be the availability of verifiable factual data for making balanced decisions on policy measures and programmes.

107. Delegations requested information on how the evaluation function was linked to the knowledge management function to strengthen UNICEF as a genuine evidence-based organization for more effective programming and advocacy. It was suggested that the policy would benefit from more specific information on whether and how evaluation would interact with regional and/or country offices and provide them with evaluation support, capacity-building, training and guidance.

108. Speakers raised the issue of the responsibility of senior management to present a management response to the annual report of the Evaluation Office, saying it would ensure a coherent and organization-wide follow-up to the evaluation policy.

109. Regarding the proposal to develop a strategic plan to complement the evaluation policy, delegations said such a document should contain only the details of implementation guidance, and that all key policy issues must be included in the evaluation policy itself.

110. It was suggested that the policy stipulate the inclusion of thematic global evaluation as an item on the agenda of the Executive Board.

111. A group of delegations said that more consultations on the development of the revised policy could have taken place with the Executive Board.

112. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/13 (see annex).

G. Thematic synthesis report on evaluation of humanitarian action

113. The report (E/ICEF/2013/15) was presented by the Director of the Evaluation Office. In accordance with decision 2011/20, a succinct management response was also prepared for information and posted on the UNICEF website; it was presented by the Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes. He noted that evaluation now formed an explicit element of the emergency response planning of UNICEF. Gaps and challenges were being addressed in the strategic plan for 2014-2017 and by inter-agency work on the transformative agenda.

114. A group of delegations commended UNICEF for the useful, well-written and self-critical report. They expressed support for the closer linkages between humanitarian assistance and development activities. They welcomed the incorporation of the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and humanitarian-related results in the strategic plan, while recommending improvements in the current draft results framework, emphasizing resilience. Among the suggestions were the need for increased cross-sectoral action, needs assessments, communication and cooperation with affected groups, and capacity to assess and manage risks. More attention needed to be paid to strengthening accountability in, and performance of, the cluster system. The number, scope and quality of evaluations needed to be increased and more joint evaluations undertaken. The latter view was echoed by several other delegations.

115. The representative of Haiti commended UNICEF for its response to the 2010 earthquake in that country. UNICEF was one of the first agencies on the ground and provided critical support with few resources. UNICEF should be applauded for becoming more risk-aware and for rapidly deploying staff. Among the lessons learned was the necessity to keep the needs of vulnerable children at the heart of the

response; to reinforce the involvement of the national Government; and to think outside the box.

116. Several other delegations also commended UNICEF for its humanitarian work, while recommending a stronger focus on results, based on clear objectives. One delegation emphasized the need for a stronger focus on equity. UNICEF was praised for strengthening its evaluation of humanitarian action, which had yielded important knowledge and lessons that should inform policy and operations at headquarters and in the field, and should be shared with partners. Evaluation needed to be more decentralized and focus more on lower-level emergencies. It was essential that institutional capacity in this area be solidified at all levels, for both UNICEF and its Government partners, and adequate resources allocated.

117. The Director for Evaluation said he appreciated the emphasis on improving reporting on results and capacity-building at all levels, for UNICEF and its partners. The Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes agreed, emphasizing that UNICEF would seek to strengthen its humanitarian monitoring and focus on outputs. Noting the importance of decentralization, he pointed out that the evaluation work had in fact been done at country and regional levels. He emphasized that all recommendations in the report, and delegations' comments, would continue to be addressed in 2013 and beyond.

H. Report of the Ethics Office

118. The annual report on the activities of the Ethics Office was submitted in accordance with decision 2010/18. The report (E/ICEF/2013/17) was introduced by the Principal Adviser for Ethics. Looking ahead, UNICEF was proposing a new key performance indicator on ethics to be included in the strategic plan. The indicator would focus on strengthening ethical organizational culture and supporting a climate in which staff members feel that it is safe and useful to speak up. The roll-out of the indicator would be supported through the training of leaders and managers.

119. There were no comments on the report.

I. Office of Internal Audit and Investigations: 2012 annual report to the Executive Board

120. The report (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.2) was presented by the Director of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations. The management response (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.3) was presented by the Deputy Executive Director for Management. The annual report of the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee for 2012 is available from the website of the UNICEF Executive Board (see http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/UNICEF_AAC_Annual_Report_for_2012-3May2013.pdf).

121. Speakers commended the Office for the informative and transparent annual report and UNICEF for the overall swift implementation of the recommendations. They encouraged UNICEF to continue to closely monitor the Office's resources so that the Office could successfully carry out its functions.

122. Delegations commended the Office for the implementation of Executive Board decision 2012/13 on public disclosure of internal audit reports in 2012. A group of

delegations requested additional information, for example, on the findings and recommendations raised by the Office across years. This would allow Member States to better track priority issues, identify key areas for improvement on the systemic management risks faced by the organization and encourage increased accountability. Information was also requested on the completion rate of planned audits.

123. Referring to a 2011 report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on disciplinary measures taken in response to fraud, corruption and other wrongdoing in that year, a speaker asked if UNICEF could produce a similar report.

124. Delegations expressed concern that 8 of 18 high-priority recommendations were related to implementation of the harmonized approach to cash transfers and the use of funds by seven country offices. Those indications of shortcomings were also cited in the external auditors' report of the United Nations Board of Auditors. Speakers welcomed the current review of the approach.

125. Speakers requested UNICEF urgently to address all recommendations to strengthen controls in the five country offices with significant high-risk recommendations. They were particularly concerned about the weaknesses in administrative and operational support, which could open the door to irregularities and malfeasance. They encouraged timely implementation of recommendations related to project management and administrative support issues.

126. Delegations expressed concern about the six high-priority recommendations concerning administration of separation benefits and entitlements, a process considered routine, especially with regard to the costing of termination indemnities and justification of mutually agreed termination. Owing to the potentially high costs, the Office was asked to verify by end 2013 whether all recommendations had been followed up.

127. Delegations asked for information about the follow-up of the five high-priority recommendations regarding the joint audit of delivering as one, led by UNDP. UNICEF was asked for information on how it would follow up with managers who perceived risk management as a stand-alone compliance exercise, rather than an approach to be fully embedded into processes and procedures.

128. They also asked about the 10 recommendations outstanding for more than 18 months and about whether the Office found the reasons cited for the delay satisfactory.

129. The Director of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations responded to each of the questions, including by providing explanations of continuous improvements made by the Office in its reporting, the current practice of tracking implementation of the approved workplan and the priority of producing a 2013 summary report on cash transfers in country offices. The Deputy Executive Director echoed her statements, adding that UNICEF was the co-chair of the inter-agency advisory committee on the harmonized approach to cash transfers and was involved in revising its framework. He further explained how most of the long-outstanding recommendations noted in the Office's 2012 annual report had already been addressed, and highlighted actions being taken on other high-risk areas.

130. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/14 (see annex).

J. Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association

131. The item was deferred to the second regular session of 2013.

K. Reports of Executive Board field visits

1. Report of the field visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia by members of the Bureau of the Executive Board of UNICEF, 15-20 April 2013

132. The report (E/ICEF/2013/CRP.12) was introduced by Mr. Jarmo Viinanen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations and President of the Executive Board. He said the visit highlighted the engagement of UNICEF in these middle-income countries. The region had been engulfed in civil strife and the members of the Bureau saw the role of UNICEF in this post-conflict situation and reconstruction phase.

133. The visit allowed Bureau members to gain first-hand understanding of the work of UNICEF at the country level and to observe concrete examples of UNICEF cooperation with the Government and other partners, including the United Nations country team. They saw UNICEF engagement in early childhood development, social protection, inclusion, and child protection, health and education. The visit had shown clearly that UNICEF, with a universal mandate, had an important role to play in the middle-income countries.

2. Report of the field visit of members of the UNICEF Executive Board to Malawi, 8-12 April 2013

134. The report (E/ICEF/2013/CRP.13) was introduced by Ms. Edel Dwyer, Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations. She said that Malawi was on track to meet Millennium Development Goals 4 and 7, but progress was lagging in many areas, including reducing poverty, improving primary-school completion rates and reducing infant and maternal mortality and child malnutrition. Those challenges must be addressed using a collaborative approach and a long-term perspective.

135. Although access to funding could be a serious constraint, a more important challenge was the lack of capacity to implement strategies and systemic inefficiencies at central, district and local levels. Strengthening capacity, addressing systemic weaknesses and providing accountability would be essential to affect progress in the long term. The Government must continue to play a leadership role in national development policy. National ownership and responsibility were essential drivers for the achievement of results and for long-term, sustainable growth and development.

3. Report of the joint field visit to Bangkok and Myanmar, 6-19 March 2013

136. The report of the joint visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UNICEF, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to Bangkok and Myanmar (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-UNW-WFP/2013/CRP.1) was introduced by Mr. Chris

Stokes, Development Adviser to the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations. He said the relationship between the United Nations and the Government of Myanmar was evolving rapidly. The activities of the United Nations appeared to be well aligned with government priorities. Instead of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the United Nations country team used a strategic framework for 2012-2015 which was developed before many of the current national reforms were under way and did not have buy-in from the Government. The changing context offered the country team an opportunity to work towards greater coherence across agencies.

137. The report was structured around four themes: inclusive growth and poverty reduction; equitable access to quality social services; disaster risk reduction and climate change; and good governance and strengthened democratic and human rights institutions. The report also addressed gender equality and women's empowerment, humanitarian operations and support to peacebuilding. The United Nations country team in Myanmar was highly committed to building an increasingly positive dialogue with the Government at all levels.

4. Discussion

138. The representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Malawi and Myanmar expressed appreciation to the members of the field visit teams for drawing attention to the challenges they faced in their different countries. Two speakers who had participated in the joint field visit said the experience had been extremely valuable, especially the opportunity to speak to beneficiaries of the country programmes.

L. Other matters

139. The Secretary of the Executive Board introduced the provisional list of agenda items for the second regular session of the Executive Board for 2013, scheduled to take place from 3 to 6 September.

M. Adoption of draft decisions

140. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2013/7 through 2013/14 (see annex). Consideration of the draft decision on the extension of ongoing country programmes was deferred.

N. Closing statements by the Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board

141. The Executive Director expressed appreciation for the rich discussion about the strategic plan. Recommendations for improvement aligned with the priorities of UNICEF on how to mainstream protection and gender and how to improve both the quality and quantity of evaluations, among other issues.

142. He emphasized that it was sad that political questions had arisen during the session. This was a cause for regret and also for alarm, since the Executive Board, like UNICEF, must remain non-political for the sake of its mandate and for the rights of the children.

143. The President said that a spirit of openness and constructive dialogue must prevail at all sessions and that the Executive Board must keep the best interests of the child as its main concern. The Executive Board had made great progress towards finalization of the strategic plan. He trusted that the Executive Director and his team would present a robust document, accompanied by an equally sound integrated budget, for approval at the second regular session of 2013.

Annex

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session of 2013

2013/7
Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan (E/ICEF/2013/11);

2. *Requests* UNICEF to continue to improve its results reporting, including in the last annual report of the current medium-term strategic plan, as requested in decision 2012/7;

3. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts to enhance results-based management, and in this regard, underscores the importance of developing a robust and harmonized results framework for the next strategic plan, 2014-2017, that is clear, simple, and demonstrates a complete result chain with expected results at each level;

4. *Acknowledges* the importance of reporting on gender equality results in all focus areas, and reiterates its request to comprehensively integrate these results into the annual report of the Executive Director.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/8
UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017: advancing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the consultative and participatory process conducted by UNICEF in developing the draft strategic plan, 2014-2017;

2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the efforts by UNICEF to include the mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the next UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017, and requests UNICEF to fully align the next strategic plan, 2014-2017, with these mandates, and further requests UNICEF to continue contributing to discussions with other funds and programmes towards developing a common approach to tracking implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review;

3. *Welcomes* the proposed structure and framework of the draft strategic plan, 2014-2017, including its proposed set of outcome areas and implementation strategies, as well as the plan's attention to humanitarian action and gender equality, with the expectation that humanitarian action and gender equality will be fully integrated into the strategic plan, recognizing that the exact formulation of the outcomes and implementation strategies is still evolving, and requests UNICEF to prepare a final

version of the draft based, inter alia, on the comments and inputs received from Member States during the annual session of the Executive Board of 2013 and during the ongoing process, which will require further consultations, clarification and amendments, for finalization and approval at its second regular session of 2013;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to provide more information, in time for the second regular session of 2013, on how results will be achieved, inter alia, by clearly demonstrating how outputs are directly attributable to UNICEF, how outputs and outcomes are linked, and how risks are assessed and will be managed, as a means to achieve the results;

5. *Welcomes* the structure and approach of the integrated results and resources framework of the draft strategic plan, 2014-2017, while recognizing that the exact formulation of the indicators, risks and assumptions in the annex to the draft strategic plan, 2014-2017, is still evolving, and requests UNICEF to prepare a final version of the draft and the annex in consultation with Member States for finalization and approval at the second regular session of the Executive Board of 2013;

6. *Notes* that the exact formulation of the results framework baselines, milestones and targets in the annex is still evolving, and requests UNICEF to further develop them in consultation with Member States, with a view to their finalization by the annual session of the Executive Board of 2014;

7. *Requests* UNICEF to provide further information in time for the second regular session of 2013 on the way in which the organization will work together and divide labour within the United Nations system, including with other funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations development system, taking into account their respective mandates, in order to enhance coherence and avoid overlap and duplication, with the aim of improving results on the ground and delivery for programme countries;

8. *Also requests* UNICEF to fully take into account the views of the Member States in finalizing the strategic plan, 2014-2017, and the annex, as well as the integrated budget, 2014-2017, for adoption at the second regular session of 2013.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/9
Report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2013/12), in line with the end-of-cycle review of the strategic priority action plan for gender equality for 2010-2013, including the presentation of progress, challenges and the way forward;

2. *Takes note* of the significant progress on leadership commitment, inter-agency partnerships, improved planning and reporting processes, and greater ownership at regional and country levels, and further notes with concern the shortcomings in the achievement and monitoring of gender-sensitive results, the lack of human and financial resources and the lack of gender expertise;

3. *Requests* UNICEF to develop a new gender equality action plan for 2014-2017, aligned with the UNICEF strategic plan for 2014-2017, taking into account the findings, recommendations and lessons learned identified in the end-of-cycle review and the report itself;

4. *Also requests* UNICEF to develop strategies, as part of the new gender equality action plan, to address each of the challenges identified in the report (E/ICEF/2013/12), such as technical capacity, expertise and resource allocation for gender equality and empowerment of women, at the corporate level, and, at the country level based on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

5. *Further requests* UNICEF to develop a performance management plan that includes a results framework, and a plan for monitoring, evaluation and reporting, as a part of the new gender equality action plan for 2014-2017, expanding on and in line with the gender-sensitive results and sex-disaggregated indicators that will be included in the UNICEF strategic plan for 2014-2017;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to cost and allocate adequate funds for the new gender equality action plan for 2014-2017, and to have this clearly described in the integrated budget;

7. *Also requests* UNICEF to report annually on progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women and on the implementation of the new gender equality action plan for 2014-2017, with the first report to be presented at the annual session of the Executive Board in 2014.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/10
Draft country programme document for Egypt

The Executive Board

1. *Recalls* its decision 2013/4 to review and approve, on an exceptional basis, the draft country programme document for Egypt at its annual session of 2013;

2. *Approves* the draft country programme document for Egypt (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.3), with the aggregate indicative budget of $12,879,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $32,000,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period July 2013 through December 2017.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/11
Draft common country programme document for Rwanda

The Executive Board

1. *Recalls* its decision 2012/10 to approve the draft common country programme document for Rwanda at its annual session of 2013;

2. *Approves* the draft common country programme document for Rwanda (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-WFP/DCCP/2013/RWA/1 and Add.3), with the aggregate indicative budget of $41,250,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $79,000,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2013-2018.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/12
Draft country programme and common country programme documents

The Executive Board

Approves the aggregate indicative budgets for the following country and common country programmes of cooperation:

Region/country	*Period*	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Document E/ICEF/2013/*
The Americas and the Caribbean				
Cuba	2014-2018	3 750 000	9 500 000	P/L.2
Eastern and Southern Africa				
Rwanda draft common country programme[a]	2013-2018			DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-WFP/ DCCP/2013/RWA/1 and Add.3
Middle East and North Africa				
Egypt[b]	July 2013-Dec. 2017			P/L.3
South Asia				
Bhutan draft common country programme results and resources framework	2014-2018	4 570 000	21 000 000	DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF/ DCCP/2013/BTN/1 and Add.3
West and Central Africa				
Benin	2014-2018	26 003 000	43 997 000	P/L.4
Congo	2014-2018	6 145 000	45 000 000	P/L.5
Niger	2014-2018	94 078 000	104 827 000	P/L.6
Nigeria	2014-2017	203 948 000	304 000 000	P/L.7
Togo	2014-2018	17 337 000	53 000 000	P/L.8

[a] See Executive Board decision 2013/11.
[b] See Executive Board decision 2013/10.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/13
Evaluation

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2013/13);

2. *Recalls* that the mandate of the evaluation function is to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of UNICEF programmes and interventions as well as the sustainability of results;

3. *Welcomes* the evidence presented in the report of continued strengthening of the evaluation function at the decentralized level, and encourages UNICEF to take further steps to address shortcomings related to evaluation coverage and to the quality of decentralized evaluations;

4. *Takes note* of the key performance indicators tracking the effectiveness of the evaluation system and the administrative data on human and financial resources;

5. *Notes* the positive work to strengthen the skills, capacities and systems of national partners and to strengthen South-South learning;

6. *Welcomes* the preparation of the revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF, consistent with the norms and standards developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group as a professional network of units responsible for evaluation in the United Nations system;

7. *Endorses* the revised evaluation policy of UNICEF (E/ICEF/2013/14);

8. *Reaffirms* the central role played by the evaluation function in UNICEF;

9. *Emphasizes* that the Evaluation Office will continue to report directly to the Executive Board through its annual report on the evaluation function, and that the Director of the Evaluation Office will continue to report administratively to the Executive Director;

10. *Requests* UNICEF to present a written statement providing the management perspective on issues raised in the annual report on the evaluation function, to be made available well in advance of the relevant session of the Executive Board;

11. *Also requests* UNICEF to allocate sufficient resources to the Evaluation Office to be shown in a separate budget line in the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017, to be presented for adoption at the second regular session 2013;

12. *Further requests* UNICEF, while implementing the evaluation policy, to track expenditure for decentralized evaluations and ensure timeliness of management responses;

13. *Calls upon* UNICEF to continue to conduct evaluations of operations at the country level in close consultation with national Governments and other national partners, as appropriate, and to assist Governments and other partners in the development of national evaluation capacities;

14. *Encourages* UNICEF to use national evaluation systems to the extent possible and to continue to incorporate capacity-building mechanisms into programme design and implementation, and to ensure that evaluations are responsive to national demand;

15. *Requests* UNICEF to report on steps taken to ensure relevant evaluation results are systematically considered and used in preparing key policies, strategies and programmes;

16. *Takes note* of the thematic synthesis report on evaluation of humanitarian action (E/ICEF/2013/15);

17. *Appreciates* the presentation and analysis in the report, and looks forward to future thematic synthesis reports, as requested in decision 2012/12;

18. *Requests* UNICEF to present a full management response to the recommendations in the thematic synthesis reports presented to the Executive Board;

19. *Also requests* UNICEF to address key gaps in the evaluation coverage of its humanitarian interventions, while continuing to improve the quality of evaluations in this field.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/14
Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2012 annual report to the Executive Board

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2012 annual report to the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.2), the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee 2012 annual report to the Executive Director, and the UNICEF management response to the annual report of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations for 2012 (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.3);

2. *Welcomes* the ongoing commitment of UNICEF to greater accountability and transparency and, in this regard, welcomes the implementation of the decision on public disclosure of the internal audit reports;

3. *Expresses* its continuing support for strengthening the internal audit and investigation functions of UNICEF;

4. *Takes note* of the work undertaken by UNICEF to implement outstanding audit recommendations, and encourages UNICEF to implement urgently the outstanding recommendations that remain;

5. *Notes with appreciation* the increased number of joint audits, and encourages UNICEF to work collaboratively with other United Nations development organizations and to find opportunities for further joint approaches, and, in addition, underscores the importance of the review of the harmonized approach to cash transfers, which should provide clear guidance for adequate application of this approach jointly developed by the organizations;

6. *Underscores* the importance of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations for UNICEF and, in this regard, requests UNICEF to assess and ensure that the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations has the level of human and financial resources, based on an assessment of risks facing the organization, to respond adequately to the needs for audit, investigations and advisory services, and requests UNICEF to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for such purposes when the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017, is presented to the Executive Board, with special emphasis being paid to the investigation function;

7. *Takes note* of the implementation by UNICEF of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

Annual session
21 June 2013